

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An actuation mechanism, comprising:
 - a handle assembly including at least a first user-operable portion;
 - an elongated body extending distally from the handle assembly;
 - a first actuation member carried within the elongated body and extending to a distal end of the elongated body;
 - wherein the first actuation member is moveable in response to movement of the first user-operable portion;
 - an electrical supply line extending from the handle assembly to the distal end of the elongated body; and
 - a coupling at the distal end of the elongated body for releasably coupling the elongated body in turn to a clamping head and an electrically-energizable head;
 - wherein, when the elongated body is coupled to the clamping head, the first actuation member controls clamping of the clamping head, and when the elongated body is coupled to the electrically-energizable head, the electrical supply line electrically energizes the electrically-energizable head.
2. The actuation mechanism of claim 1, wherein:
 - the clamping head comprises a stapler.
3. The actuation mechanism of claim 1, wherein the handle assembly includes a second user-operable portion, and the clamping head comprises a stapler with a staple driving mechanism, the actuation mechanism further comprising:
 - a second actuation member carried within the elongated body and extending to a distal end of the elongated body;

wherein the second actuation member is moveable in response to movement of the second user-operable portion for controlling firing of staples in the staple driving mechanism.

4. The actuation mechanism of claim 1, wherein:
the coupling comprises a quick connect/quick release coupling.
5. The actuation mechanism of claim 1, wherein:
the coupling comprises a ball and socket coupling.
6. The actuation mechanism of claim 1, wherein:
the electrically-energizable head comprises an ablation head.
7. The actuation mechanism of claim 6, wherein:
the first actuation mechanism controls clamping of jaws of the ablation head.
8. An ablation device, comprising:
a first jaw including a first electrode;
a second jaw having a proximal end and including a second electrode, the second jaw operatively associated with the first jaw and opposing the first jaw;
an actuation mechanism releasably coupled to the proximal end of the second jaw;
a first actuation member responsive to the actuation mechanism, and extending from the proximal end of the second jaw for causing a clamping movement of the first and second jaws; and
an electrical supply line responsive to the actuation mechanism, and extending from the proximal end of the second jaw for electrically energizing the first and second electrodes.

9. The ablation device of claim 8, wherein:
the proximal end of the second jaw comprises a ball and socket coupling for releasably coupling to the actuation mechanism.
10. The ablation device of claim 8, wherein:
the proximal end of the second jaw comprises a quick connect/quick release coupling.
11. A clamping ablation head, comprising:
a first jaw having an associated first electrode;
a second jaw operatively associated with the first jaw, opposing the first jaw, and including an electrical contact; and
an electrode holder holding a second electrode; wherein:
the electrode holder is removably receivable by the second jaw; and
the second electrode includes an electrical contact that is electrically coupled to the electrical contact of the second jaw when the electrode holder is received by the second jaw.
12. The clamping ablation head of claim 11, further comprising:
a first actuation member responsive to an actuation mechanism for causing a clamping movement of the first and second jaws; and
an electrical supply line responsive to the actuation mechanism for electrically energizing the first and second electrodes.
13. The clamping ablation head of claim 11, wherein:
the first and second electrodes extend substantially arcuately along respective lengths of the first and second jaws, respectively.

14. The clamping ablation head of claim 11, further comprising:
a proximal end on which the second jaw is carried for releasably coupling to a distal end of the actuation mechanism.

15. The clamping ablation head of claim 14, wherein:
the proximal end comprises a quick connect/quick release coupling.

16. The clamping ablation head of claim 11, wherein:
the electrode holder and second jaw have corresponding mating structures by which the electrode holder is removably received by the second jaw.

17. The clamping ablation head of claim 11, wherein:
the first electrode is carried by a further electrode holder that is removably receivable by the first jaw; and
the first electrode includes an electrical contact that is electrically coupled to an electrical contact of the first jaw when the further electrode holder is received by the first jaw.

18. An ablation head, comprising:
a first jaw having a first contact and a second jaw having a second contact;
a first electrode holder and a second electrode holder removably receivable by the first jaw and the second jaw, respectively;
a first electrode comprising a third contact, the first electrode carried by the first electrode holder; and
a second electrode comprising a fourth contact, the second electrode carried by the second electrode holder;
wherein the first and second contacts of the first and second jaws are respectively electrically coupled to the third and fourth contacts of the first and second electrodes when the first and second electrode holders are received by the first and second jaws

19. The ablation head of claim 18, wherein:
one of the first and second electrodes is a cathode electrode, and the other of the first and second electrodes is an anode electrode.

20. The ablation head of claim 18, wherein:
the first and second electrode holders have mating structures corresponding mating structures of the first and second jaws, respectively, enabling the first and second electrode holders to be removably received by the first and second jaws, respectively.

21. A stapler head, comprising:
a first jaw including an anvil;
a second jaw operatively associated with the first jaw, opposing the first jaw and including a staple driving mechanism; and
a staple holder including a staple supply; wherein:
the staple holder is removably receivable by the second jaw; and
the staple supply is actuable by the staple driving mechanism when the staple holder is received by the second jaw.

22. The stapler head of claim 21, further comprising:
a first actuation member responsive to an actuation mechanism for causing a clamping movement of the first and second jaws; and
a second actuation member responsive to the actuation mechanism for controlling the staple driving mechanism to fire the staples.

23. The stapler head of claim 21, further comprising:
a proximal end on which the second jaw is carried for releasably coupling to a distal end of the actuation mechanism.

24. The stapler head of claim 23, wherein:
the proximal end comprises a quick connect/quick release coupling.
25. A combination stapler and ablation head, comprising:
a first jaw including an anvil;
a second jaw operatively associated with the first jaw, opposing the first jaw and including a staple driving mechanism; and
a staple holder operatively associated with the second jaw, wherein the staple holder is actuable by the staple driving mechanism, and includes a staple supply;
an electrode holder; and
an electrode carried by the electrode holder and including an electrical contact;
wherein the electrode holder is removably receivable by at least one of the first and second jaws such that the electrical contact of the electrode is electrically coupled to an electrical contact of the at least one of the first and second jaws.
26. The combination stapler and ablation head of claim 25, wherein:
the electrode holder and the at least one of the first and second jaws have corresponding mating structures by which the electrode holder is removably received by the at least one of the first and second jaws.
27. The combination stapler and ablation head of claim 25, wherein:
the electrode holder is provided as an overlay of the at least one of the first and second jaws.
28. A clamping device, comprising:
a handle assembly including first and second user-operable portions;
an elongated body extending distally from the handle assembly;
first and second actuation members carried within the elongated body and extending to a distal end of the elongated body;

wherein the first actuation member is moveable in response to movement of the first user-operable portion, and the second actuation member is movable in response to movement of the second user-operable portion;

an electrical supply line extending from the handle assembly to the distal end of the elongated body;

a coupling at the distal end of the elongated body; and

a clamping head comprising a first jaw, and a second jaw operatively associated with the first jaw and opposing the first jaw, the second jaw having a proximal end configured to releasably couple to the coupling at the distal end of the elongated body;

wherein the clamping head is actuatable by the first and second actuation members.

29. The clamping device of claim 28, wherein:

the proximal end of the second jaw and the coupling at the distal end of the elongated body form a quick connect/quick release coupling.